

STATE SENATOR
BRUCE PATTERSON
IN THE LOOP ★

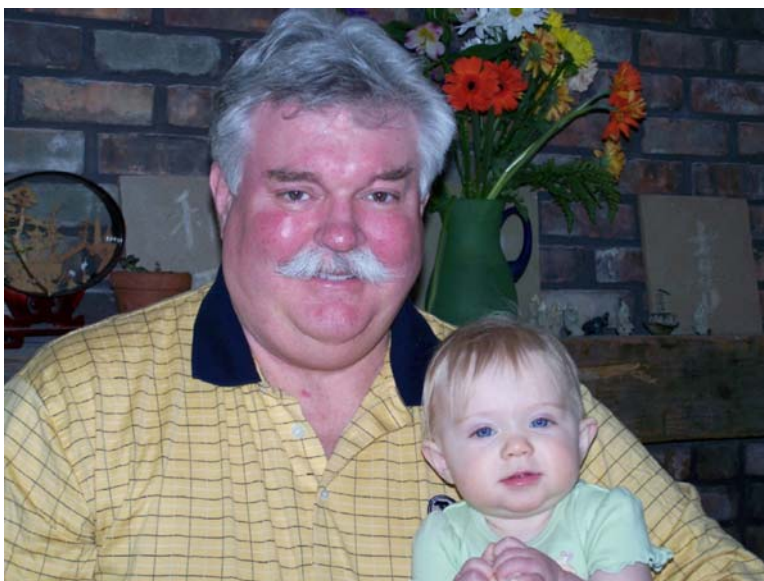
Serving the 7th District | P.O. Box 30036 | Lansing, MI 48909
PHONE: (517) 373-7350 | TOLL FREE: 1-866-262-7307 | FAX: (517) 373-9228
WEB: www.senate.michigan.gov/patterson | E-MAIL: senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov

05/19/06

→ *PLEASE FORWARD THIS TO A FRIEND!*

Sen. Patterson to address SWCCC

On Monday, May 22, at noon, Senator Patterson will speak to a luncheon gathering of the Southern Wayne County Chamber of Commerce. The luncheon will be served at 11:30 at Crystal Gardens, 16703 Fort St., Southgate. Sen. Patterson is scheduled to speak at about noon. Sen. Basham will also speak. Every year, some eager students are invited to attend. Sen. Patterson is sponsoring those from Gabriel Richard High School.



Tannis Shay Patterson reaches One

Sen. and Mrs. Patterson, with their son Justin and his wife Denise, are celebrating the First Birthday of Tannis Shay on May 24. She is the Pattersons' first grandchild. Sen. Patterson says, "Of all the titles I've attained, 'Grandpa' is the *best*."

Electronic Visitation to aid Parents & Grandparents

Divorce, separation, and custody issues often hamper the efforts of loving grandparents to continue to voice their love for their grandchildren. Distance complicates further the

effort to stay in contact. Can courts assist a grandparent to maintain contact with grand-kids in the custody of the other parent? What about a parent, too?

Sen. Patterson has introduced a bill to allow “electronic communication” to be established for a grandparent who lives at a distance from the child. This could include telephone contact, or internet connections. The same would apply for parents separated from their kids.

Patterson’s bill, SB 1258, has the enthusiastic support of Richard S. Victor, founder and executive director of the National Nonprofit Grandparents Rights Organization.

Patterson said, “This will make the law clear that electronic means can be used to allow ‘visitation.’ Parents or grandparents could use electronic communication to supplement, not to *replace*, in-person visits with their children or grandchildren. This allows full use of modern technology now widely available. We want to aid families as best we can, even when they are in difficult or imperfect situations.” Patterson chairs the Senate’s Technology & Energy Committee.

A family court may grant to a parent or grandparent a reasonable amount of electronic communication at reasonable hours during the other parent’s periods of physical placement with the child. ‘Electronic communication’ is defined as time when a parent or grandparent and the child communicate by using various types of communication tools, such as the telephone, electronic mail, instant messaging, and video conferencing or other wired or wireless technologies via the Internet.

Patterson played a critical role in the creation of Public Act 542 of 2004, which provides for “grandparenting time” in cases of separated families.

Patterson raises funds for School Program

Last Saturday, May 13, from Noon to 12:30pm, Sen. Bruce Patterson, 7th District, joined in for a rollicking annual event, to help the radio station’s effort, with fun and profit. This was part of the day’s broadcast on Plymouth’s Salem High School Station, WSDP, 88.1FM, 9am to 10pm. The station is known as “The Escape.” Students interested in radio from all of Plymouth’s high schools have opportunity to take part and learn.

Patterson said, “I really enjoyed my stint as an auctioneer, especially interacting with the students. Tim and Catherine asked me some excellent questions about my term as a Senator. I appreciated their verve and vitality.”

Students Catherine Furman, and Tim Thompson, co-anchored the auction and interview while Sen. Patterson was on the air, during Salem High School's Charity Radio Auction.

Sen. Patterson also donated an opportunity to go golfing with Sen. Patterson at golfer’s choice of courses in Lansing Country Club, Grosse Ile Country Club, or Meadowbrook Golf Course; or dinner with Senator and Mrs. Patterson at a restaurant of choice, anywhere in the 7th Senate District.

Last year’s auction raised \$11,000. This year’s event raised \$12,000. The student station has been on the air for 34 years.

Trenton “Breakfast with Bruce” a big success

About 30 seniors attended and enjoyed Joan Rich and Lt. Rick Miles' presentations, Friday, May 19th. Lt. Miles spoke about accident statistics in Trenton. He identified the busiest intersections and answered seniors' questions about traffic laws.

Joan Rich also reassured the seniors that they can continue driving and that the Traffic Improvement Association can help them compensate for physical changes that are happening to them, such as reaction time. Joan explained that seniors need to drive more cautiously. One example was to make sure you have enough distance between yourself and the car in front of you in case you have to make a quick stop.

Mayor Gerald Brown was also in attendance, and greeted the crowd.

Senator Patterson concurred with Joan. “As we get older we need to be aware of the changes that may affect our driving.”

Pandemic Legislation passes Senate

Possibility that the Asian bird flu might reach our shores *via* migrating birds mingling in the Arctic has raised health preparedness concerns. The responsible virus has not yet mutated to a form easily spread among humans, but has claimed human lives in several countries among bird handlers. Strenuous efforts have brought significant results in the region where the flu had hit hardest, and epidemiologists are hopeful that the disease has peaked.

Preparedness is still urged by governments around the world. The state Senate approved a bill requiring the state to form and update pandemic influenza plan on Tuesday. In 1918, a flu epidemic the U.S. killed tens of thousands. [In California, churches were ordered closed for six weeks, but not movie theatres!]

The bills allow the state to ban public gatherings, if needed, to control any pandemic outbreak, and requires the Agriculture Department to work with Community Health to help control a pandemic, particularly of avian flu caused by the H5N1 virus.

The legislation also requires that the state ensure its plan coordinates with national pandemic planning.

'Old Blue Plate' retirement bill heads for governor's desk

After 24 years on the road, Michigan's familiar old car license in blue and white is facing mandatory retirement. The bills accomplishing this were passed almost unanimously by both houses. However, they are tie-barred to a supplemental appropriations bill still in the Senate. So there will be some delay until that passes.

The plan is that reflective materials in license plates will make the tags more readable.

Encouraging High Tech Business

The House has passed two bills unanimously to allow high tech businesses to be eligible for tax credits from the Michigan Economic Growth Authority. These were jumpstarted by a fervent hope to have Ford consolidate its Arizona research and development operations back in Michigan.

“Big companies like Ford, who participate in high technology research should have the same access to Single Business Tax [SBT] credits as the smaller companies that specialize in research and development,” said Representative Bill Huizinga (R-Zeeland), who sponsored one of the bills.

The two bills, HB 6034 and 6035, now head to the Senate for consideration.

Office Hours schedule for the rest of May, and June 2006

Sue Trussell, Sen. Patterson’s District Representative, will hold office hours at different locations each week. Office Hours will be on Mondays, from 11 am to 1 pm.

May 22nd -- Mochavation Café, 8537 Macomb Street, Grosse Ile, with *time change*:
9 am to 11 am.

No office hours are scheduled for May 29th – MEMORIAL DAY.

June 5th -- Sumpter Twp Hall, 23480 Sumpter Rd., Belleville

June 12th -- Woodhaven City Hall, 21869 West Road, Woodhaven

June 19th -- Flat Rock Library, 25200 Gibraltar Road, Flat Rock

June 26th -- Huron Twp. Hall, 22950 Huron River Drive, Huron Twp

– This will be in their new building.

Contact Information

Thank you for your interest in our current state issues. If you would like to receive future updates via e-mail, please contact my office at < senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov >.

You can also visit me in my Lansing office at 505 Farnum Building, just across S. Capitol Avenue from the state Capitol; or you can send me mail at P. O. Box 30036, Lansing, MI 48909. Telephone (517) 373-7350 or (866) 262-7307; fax (517) 373-9228. I want to hear from you.

See the *Legislative Questionnaire* on the Website, too! Your responses are welcomed!